

225/49626

U S APPLICATION NO (if known, see 37 CFR 1.5)

09/762676

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES
DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A
FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371**

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP99/05741	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 7 August 1999	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 11 August 1998
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TITLE OF INVENTION
VEHICLE WITH A RAMP FOR A WHEELCHAIR

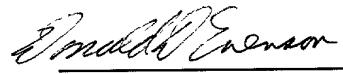
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371
3. This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
4. A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
 - a. is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. has been transmitted by the International Bureau
 - c. is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US)
6. A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
7. Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - a. are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. have not been made and will not be made.
8. A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
9. An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). (Unexecuted, 2 pages)
10. A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Item 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:

11. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 and a Copy of an International Search Report
12. An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
- A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
14. A substitute specification.
15. A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
16. Other items or information: Form PCT/IPEA/416 and Form PCT/IPEA/409 (with English Translation)

U.S. APPLICATION NO (if known, see 37 CFR 1.5 09/1762676		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/EP99/05741	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 225/49626					
17. [] The following fees are submitted: Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5)):		<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">CALCULATIONS</td> <td>PTO USE ONLY</td> </tr> </table>			CALCULATIONS		PTO USE ONLY	
CALCULATIONS		PTO USE ONLY						
Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO \$860.00 International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) .. \$690.00 No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) \$710.00 Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) paid to USPTO \$1000.00 International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4) \$100.00		<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =</td> <td>\$860.00</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$860.00	
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$860.00						
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than [X] 20 [] 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).		\$130.00						
Claims	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate					
Total Claims	8-20=	0	X \$18.00	\$				
Independent Claims	3-3=	0	X \$80.00	\$				
Multiple dependent claims(s) (if applicable)			+ \$270.00	\$				
		TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =		\$990.00				
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).		SUBTOTAL =		\$990.00				
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than [] 20 [] 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).		+						
		TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =		\$990.00				
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28,3.31). \$40.00 per property +		+		\$				
		TOTAL FEE ENCLOSED =		\$990.00				
		Amount to be:		\$				
		refunded						
		charged		\$				
<p>a. [X] A check in the amount of <u>\$990.00</u> for the filing fee is enclosed</p> <p>b. [] Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of \$_____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p> <p>c. [X] The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. <u>05-1323</u>. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p>								
NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.								
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: Evenson, McKeown, Edwards & Lenahan, P.L.L.C. 1200 G Street, N.W., Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20005 Tel. No. (202) 628-8800 Fax No. (202) 628-8844								
 SIGNATURE Donald D. Evenson								
NAME 26,160								
REGISTRATION NUMBER February 12, 2001								
DATE								

09/762676
532 Rec'd PCT/PPO 12 FEB 2001

Attorney Docket: 225/49626
PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: MARTIN MAUBACH

Serial No.: NOT YET ASSIGNED PCT NO.: PCT/EP99/05741

Filed: FEBRUARY 12, 2001

Title: VEHICLE WITH A RAMP FOR A WHEELCHAIR

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Box PCT
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

February 12, 2001

Sir:

Please enter the following amendments to the specification, claims and abstract, as amended by way of Annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report for PCT/EP99/05741, prior to the examination of the application during the U.S. National Phase, prior to the examination of the application.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

A substitute specification is submitted herewith.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel all claims presently in the application and substitute new claims 6-13 as follows:

--6. (New) A vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair, the ramp pivoting about a connection from a lowered position in which the ramp forms one surface with the vehicle floor and is accommodated by a floor section that is lower than the vehicle floor, towards

a ramp forming one surface with the vehicle floor in a lowered position, accommodated by the floor section, and a pivotal connection being arranged at the outside of the floor section,

wherein the ramp pivots about the connection from the lowered position towards the ground to assist movement of the wheelchair, when an associated door is open, and the ramp remains in a secured second upright position when the floor section is occupied by the wheelchair.

12. (New) A vehicle ramp assembly according to claim 11, wherein the ramp has a first and a second movable section connected to one another by at least one hinge, and the first section is pivotally connected to the vehicle at a fixed location and the second section swings in towards the vehicle floor.

13. (New) A method of making a vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair, comprising the steps of:

providing a vehicle floor with a lowered floor section serving as a load surface for the wheelchair, and

pivottally connecting a ramp at the outside of the floor section so the ramp swings towards a road surface to assist movement of the wheelchair when an associated door is open,

wherein the ramp in a lowered position forms one surface with the vehicle floor and is accommodated by the lowered floor section, and the ramp remains in a secured upright position when the lowered floor section is occupied by the wheelchair.--

the ground to assist movement of the wheelchair when an associated door is open, the pivotal connection being arranged at the outside of the floor section,

wherein the floor section serves as a load surface for the wheelchair, and the ramp remains in a secured upright position when the floor section is occupied by the wheelchair.

7. (New) A vehicle according to Claim 6, wherein the ramp is connected to the vehicle by at least one vertically displaceable pivot mounting.

8. (New) A vehicle according to Claim 6, wherein the ramp has a first and a second movable section, which are connected to one another by at least one hinge, and the first section is connected pivotably to the vehicle at a fixed location, while the second section swings down towards the vehicle floor.

9. (New) A vehicle according to Claim 8, wherein the hinge action of the hinge can be blocked when the ramp is in the secured upright position.

10. (New) A vehicle according to Claim 9, wherein the blocking of the hinge action can be brought about by belt-latch mechanisms.

11. (New) A vehicle ramp assembly for a wheelchair comprising:

a floor section in a vehicle serving as a load surface for the wheelchair lower than a vehicle floor,

REMARKS

Entry of the amendments to the specification and claims, as amended by way of Annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report for PCT/EP99/05741, before examination of the application in the U.S. National Phase is respectfully requested. These claims patentably define over the art of record.

If there are any questions regarding this Preliminary Amendment or this application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response and shortages in other fees, be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Account of Evenson, McKeown, Edwards & Lenahan, P.L.L.C., Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/49626).

Respectfully submitted,


Donald D. Evenson
Registration No. 26,160

EVENSON, McKEOWN, EDWARDS
& LENAHAN, P.L.L.C.
1200 G Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone No.: (202) 628-8800
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844

WGA:kms:sbh

VEHICLE WITH A RAMP FOR A WHEELCHAIR

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair that can be lowered about a pivotal connection point arranged at the outside of the floor section, out of its lowered position, in which the ramp is accommodated by a floor section lowered relative to the vehicle floor and forms one surface with the vehicle floor, towards the roadway to assist the movement of a person in a wheelchair, once an associated door has been opened.

[0002] In the last few years vehicles referred to as high-capacity sedans or as vans have become increasingly popular with customers. Compared with conventional passenger vehicles, this type of vehicle offers a larger and more versatile interior and comparable performance and it is therefore increasingly also being used to carry people in wheelchairs. To maintain the required headroom in this case, it is customary to form a step in the vehicle floor in the area where the wheelchair is to be located, this generally being achieved by means of a wedge-shaped opening in the rear area of the vehicle, for example.

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[0003] A ramp is attached in a known manner to the now lower loading edge by means of a hinge joint, this ramp being secured upright on the inside in front of the associated door and being extended towards the roadway to assist the movement of the person in the wheelchair into the vehicle. If no wheelchair is being carried, the ramp remains in its upright position and the vehicle can thus be identified as a vehicle for disabled persons, sometimes leading to problems with the acceptability of such vehicles among people who are not disabled. If a vehicle equipped in this way is used as an ordinary means of transport and is used to take cargo, there are difficulties with loading and unloading because the ramp has to be operated. Moreover, the utilisation of space is not ideal owing to the discontinuity in the vehicle floor due to the lowered load surface.

[0004] GB 2 306 152 A has disclosed the provision, especially in the case of low-floor buses, of a wedge-shaped floor section that slopes outwards and downwards in a door area and pivotally connected to which, on the door side, is a likewise wedge-shaped ramp that can be moved from its extended position, in which it is supported on the roadway, into its retracted position, in which the ramp forms one surface with the vehicle floor. This provides a good means of entry and exit for a person in a wheelchair, whose wheelchair is accommodated by a floor area adjoining the ramp to keep the ramp free for an unhindered

further sequence of motion. Utilisation of space in this way is acceptable in a low-floor bus but is not acceptable in a high-capacity sedans because of its relatively small floor area.

[0005] It is the object of the invention to design and arrange the ramp in such a way that the vehicle cannot be identified as a vehicle for handicapped persons when no wheelchair is being carried and, at the same time, loading and unloading is made considerably easier while achieving good utilisation of space.

[0006] This object is achieved by a vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair that can be swung out of its lowered position towards the roadway to assist the movement of a person in a wheelchair, the ramp pivots about a pivotal connection point arranged at the outside of floor section from a position in which the ramp forms one surface with the vehicle floor and is accommodated by the floor section, which is lower relative to the vehicle floor, to the roadway once an associated door has been opened. The lower floor section serves as a load surface for the wheelchair, and the ramp remains in a secured upright position when the floor section is occupied by the wheelchair.

[0007] In a preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, the ramp is connected to the vehicle by means of at least one vertically displaceable pivot mounting. The cavity that remains

underneath the ramp when the latter is raised can be used as additional storage space.

[0008] In another preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, the ramp has two moveable sections, which are connected to one another by at least one hinge. In this arrangement, the first section is connected pivotably to the vehicle at a fixed location, while the second section can be swung down towards the vehicle floor.

[0009] To prevent the ramp being lowered unintentionally, the hinge action can be blocked when the ramp is in the raised condition.

[0010] The cancellation of the hinge action can be brought about by means of locking means in the form of belt-latch mechanisms.

[0011] The subject matter of the invention is explained in greater detail below with reference to two exemplary embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Fig. 1 shows a first exemplary embodiment with a one-piece ramp that has been extended,

[0013] Fig. 2 shows the position of the ramp when no wheelchair is being carried,

[0014] Fig. 3 shows a second exemplary embodiment with a two-piece ramp that has been extended,

[0015] Fig. 4 shows the position of the ramp when a wheelchair is being carried, and

[0016] Fig. 5 shows the position of the ramp when not carrying a wheelchair.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] According to Fig. 1, which shows a vehicle 1 in the form of a high-capacity sedan, the rear side 2 of which can be closed by means of a rear door (not shown), the vehicle floor 3 has an offset floor section 4, which forms a flat surface extending as far as the rear of the vehicle 1 and serves as a load surface for a wheelchair. The rear door can be swung open upwards or to the side and can also be of two-piece design with lateral pivoting axes. It would also be possible to provide access at the side via a door that can be pivoted in the same way or via a sliding door, which is adjoined by the floor section 4.

[0018] Connected pivotally to the outer end 5 of the floor section 4 is a ramp 6. This can be accomplished by means of hinges 7, as indicated, only one of which is visible, forming part of a pivot mounting 8. This pivot mounting 8 is guided in a vertically displaceable manner in a rail 9 and can be fixed at least in its upper position. The ramp 6 has upright side rails 10 and a gripping slot 11.

[0019] The extended ramp 6 shown in Fig. 1 rests by its free end 12 on the roadway, allowing a wheelchair to be moved in the direction of the floor section 4 via the oblique plane thus created and to be fixed on the said surface. Once the wheelchair is in its correct location, the ramp 6 is raised and fixed in a known manner in the raised position, it being possible to achieve this, for example, by means of bolts (not shown). The rear door (likewise not shown), which is designed to match the rear opening, can now be closed.

[0020] When the person in the wheelchair leaves the vehicle 1 via the ramp 6, which is lowered as shown in Fig. 1, the said ramp can be raised by means of the pivot mountings 8, which are vertically displaceable in the rails 9, and then swung towards the vehicle floor 3, resulting in a continuous flat surface together with the vehicle floor 3 in the lowered position of the ramp 6, allowing advantageous loading of the vehicle 1. This

position of the ramp 6 can be seen from Fig. 2, which likewise shows that the storage space 13 formed between the ramp 6 and the floor section 4 can be used for storing items that can be pushed in.

[0021] In the exemplary embodiment shown in Figs 3-5, the ramp 6 has two moveable sections 14 and 15, which are connected to one another by hinges 16. The first, shorter, section 14 is likewise connected pivotably to the vehicle 1 at a fixed location, via hinges 17, while the second, longer, section 15 can be swung towards the vehicle floor 3. To raise the ramp 6, the two sections 14 and 15 are moved into an extended position, the hinge action between the two sections 14 and 15 being cancelled by the interengagement of locking means 18, which, according to Fig. 4, are designed as belt-latch mechanisms 19. It would, of course, also be possible to achieve locking by means of bolts.

[0022] If the intention is to cover the floor section 4 when not carrying a wheelchair, the ramp 6 is moved towards the vehicle floor 3, the two sections 14 and 15 of the ramp 6 pivoting about the axis of the hinges 16 and 17 during this process and giving the arrangement shown in Fig. 5 at the end of the pivoting operation. Here, the shorter section 14 rises from the floor section 4 as far as the level of the vehicle floor 3, and the longer section 15 covers the floor section 4, the lowered

position being secured by engagement in retaining means (not shown) as section 15 is lowered towards the vehicle floor 3, section 15 being released automatically again as it is raised.

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DaimlerChrysler AG
Stuttgart

Auer

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Vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair

The invention relates to a vehicle with a ramp for a wheelchair that can be lowered about a pivotal connection point arranged at the outside of the floor section, out of its lowered position, in which the ramp is accommodated by a floor section lowered relative to the vehicle floor and forms one surface with the vehicle floor, towards the roadway to assist the movement of a person in a wheelchair, once an associated door has been opened.

In the last few years vehicles referred to as high-capacity saloons or as vans have become increasingly popular with customers. Compared with conventional passenger vehicles, this type of vehicle offers a larger and more versatile interior and comparable performance and it is therefore increasingly also being used to carry people in wheelchairs. To maintain the required headroom in this case, it is customary to form a step in the vehicle floor in the area where the wheelchair is to be located, this generally being achieved by means of a wedge-shaped opening in the rear area of the vehicle, for example.

A ramp is attached in a known manner to the now lower loading edge by means of a hinge joint, this ramp being secured upright on the inside in front of the associated door and being extended towards the roadway to assist the movement of the person in the wheelchair into the vehicle. If no wheelchair is being carried, the ramp

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remains in its upright position and the vehicle can thus be identified as a vehicle for disabled persons, sometimes leading to problems with the acceptability of such vehicles among people who are not disabled. If a 5 vehicle equipped in this way is used as an ordinary means of transport and is used to take cargo, there are difficulties with loading and unloading because the ramp has to be operated. Moreover, the utilisation of space is not ideal owing to the discontinuity in the vehicle floor 10 due to the lowered load surface.

GB 2 306 152 A has disclosed the provision, especially in the case of low-floor buses, of a wedge-shaped floor section that slopes outwards and downwards in a door area and pivotally connected to which, on the 15 door side, is a likewise wedge-shaped ramp that can be moved from its extended position, in which it is supported on the roadway, into its retracted position, in which the ramp forms one surface with the vehicle floor. This provides a good means of entry and exit for a person 20 in a wheelchair, whose wheelchair is accommodated by a floor area adjoining the ramp to keep the ramp free for an unhindered further sequence of motion. Utilisation of space in this way is acceptable in a low-floor bus but is not acceptable in a high-capacity saloon because of its 25 relatively small floor area.

It is the object of the invention to design and arrange the ramp in such a way that the vehicle cannot be identified as a vehicle for handicapped persons when no wheelchair is being carried and, at the same time, 30 loading and unloading is made considerably easier while achieving good utilisation of space.

This object is achieved by the features of Claim 1.

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In a preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, the ramp is connected to the vehicle by means of at least one vertically displaceable pivot mounting. The cavity that remains underneath the ramp when the 5 latter is raised can be used as additional storage space.

In another preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, the ramp has two moveable sections, which are connected to one another by at least one hinge. In this arrangement, the first section is connected pivotably to 10 the vehicle at a fixed location, while the second section can be swung down towards the vehicle floor.

To prevent the ramp being lowered unintentionally, the hinge action can be blocked when the ramp is in the raised condition.

15 The cancellation of the hinge action can be brought about by means of locking means in the form of belt-latch mechanisms.

The subject matter of the invention is explained in greater detail below with reference to two exemplary 20 embodiments. In the drawing:

Fig. 1 shows a first exemplary embodiment with a one-piece ramp that has been extended,

Fig. 2 shows the position of the ramp when no wheelchair is being carried,

25 Fig. 3 shows a second exemplary embodiment with a two-piece ramp that has been extended,

Fig. 4 shows the position of the ramp when a wheelchair is being carried, and

Fig. 5 shows the position of the ramp when not 30 carrying a wheelchair.

According to Fig. 1, which shows a vehicle 1 in the form of a high-capacity saloon, the rear side 2 of which can be closed by means of a rear door (not shown), the vehicle floor 3 has an offset floor section 4, which

- 4 -

forms a flat surface extending as far as the rear of the vehicle 1 and serves as a load surface for a wheelchair. The rear door can be swung open upwards or to the side and can also be of two-piece design with lateral pivoting 5 axes. It would also be possible to provide access at the side via a door that can be pivoted in the same way or via a sliding door, which is adjoined by the floor section 4.

Connected pivotally to the outer end 5 of the 10 floor section 4 is a ramp 6. This can be accomplished by means of hinges 7, as indicated, only one of which is visible, forming part of a pivot mounting 8. This pivot mounting 8 is guided in a vertically displaceable manner in a rail 9 and can be fixed at least in its upper 15 position. The ramp 6 has upright side rails 10 and a gripping slot 11.

The extended ramp 6 shown in Fig. 1 rests by its free end 12 on the roadway, allowing a wheelchair to be moved in the direction of the floor section 4 via the 20 oblique plane thus created and to be fixed on the said surface. Once the wheelchair is in its correct location, the ramp 6 is raised and fixed in a known manner in the raised position, it being possible to achieve this, for example, by means of bolts (not shown). The rear door 25 (likewise not shown), which is designed to match the rear opening, can now be closed.

When the person in the wheelchair leaves the vehicle 1 via the ramp 6, which is lowered as shown in Fig. 1, the said ramp can be raised by means of the pivot 30 mountings 8, which are vertically displaceable in the rails 9, and then swung towards the vehicle floor 3, resulting in a continuous flat surface together with the vehicle floor 3 in the lowered position of the ramp 6, allowing advantageous loading of the vehicle 1. This

- 5 -

position of the ramp 6 can be seen from Fig. 2, which likewise shows that the storage space 13 formed between the ramp 6 and the floor section 4 can be used for storing items that can be pushed in.

5 In the exemplary embodiment shown in Figs 3-5, the ramp 6 has two moveable sections 14 and 15, which are connected to one another by hinges 16. The first, shorter, section 14 is likewise connected pivotably to the vehicle 1 at a fixed location, via hinges 17, while
10 the second, longer, section 15 can be swung towards the vehicle floor 3. To raise the ramp 6, the two sections 14 and 15 are moved into an extended position, the hinge action between the two sections 14 and 15 being cancelled by the interengagement of locking means 18, which,
15 according to Fig. 4, are designed as belt-latch mechanisms 19. It would, of course, also be possible to achieve locking by means of bolts.

If the intention is to cover the floor section 4 when not carrying a wheelchair, the ramp 6 is moved
20 towards the vehicle floor 3, the two sections 14 and 15 of the ramp 6 pivoting about the axis of the hinges 16 and 17 during this process and giving the arrangement shown in Fig. 5 at the end of the pivoting operation. Here, the shorter section 14 rises from the floor section
25 4 as far as the level of the vehicle floor 3, and the longer section 15 covers the floor section 4, the lowered position being secured by engagement in retaining means (not shown) as section 15 is lowered towards the vehicle floor 3, section 15 being released automatically again as
30 it is raised.

DaimlerChrysler AG
Stuttgart

Auer
23.08.2000

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New Patent Claim 1

Vehicle with a ramp (6) for a wheelchair that can be lowered about a pivotal connection point arranged at the outside of the floor section, out of its lowered 10 position, in which the ramp (6) is accommodated by a floor section lowered relative to the vehicle floor (3) and forms one surface with the vehicle floor (3), towards the roadway to assist the movement of a person in a wheelchair, once an associated door has been opened, 15 characterized in that the lowered floor section serves as a load surface for the wheelchair, and the ramp (6) remains in a secured upright position when the floor section is occupied by a wheelchair.

DaimlerChrysler AG
Stuttgart

Abstract

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When there is no wheelchair to be transported in a vehicle with a load surface that has been lowered relative to the vehicle floor to take a wheelchair and pivotally connected to the outer end of which is a ramp 10 that can be lowered from a secured upright position towards the roadway to assist movement, once an associated door has been opened, the ramp can be lowered towards the load surface until the ramp forms one surface with the higher vehicle floor.

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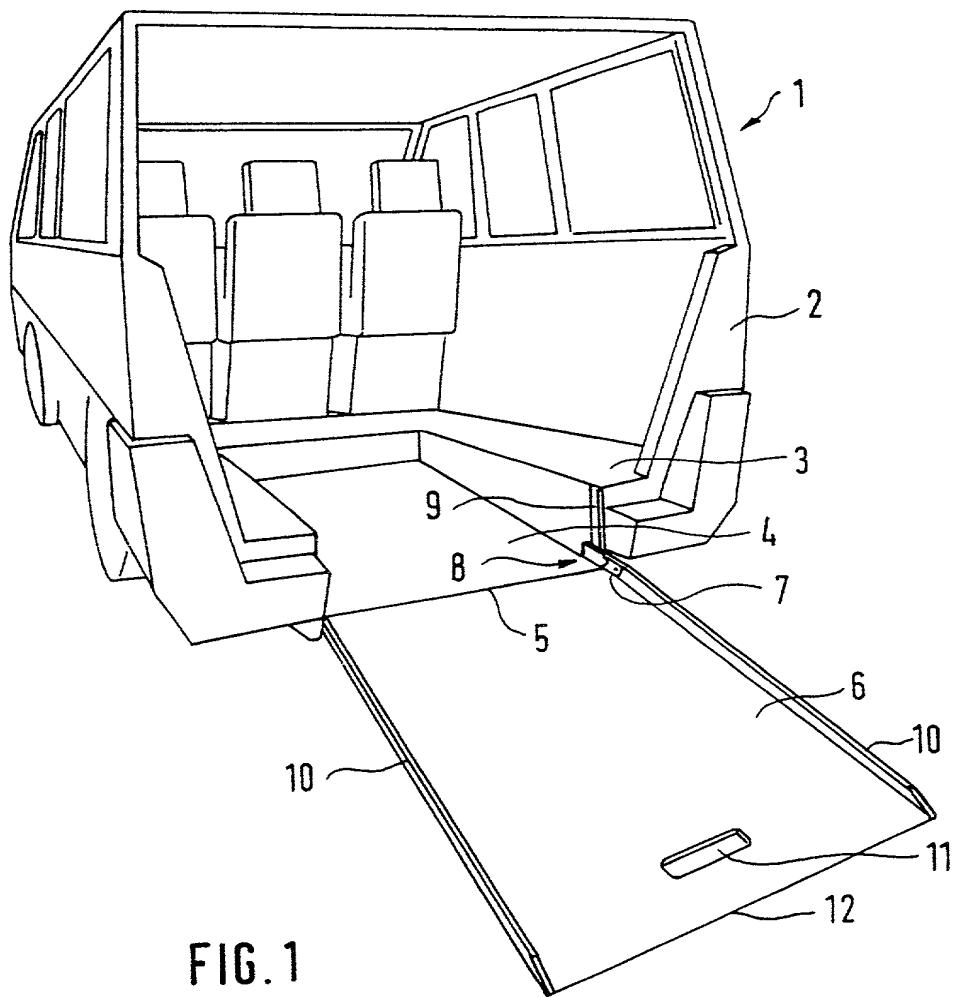


FIG.1

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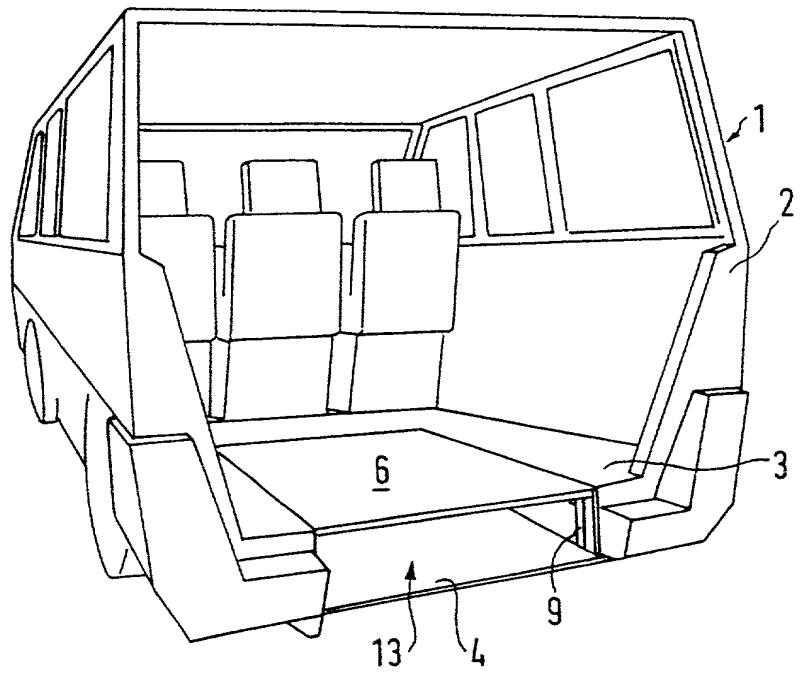


FIG.2

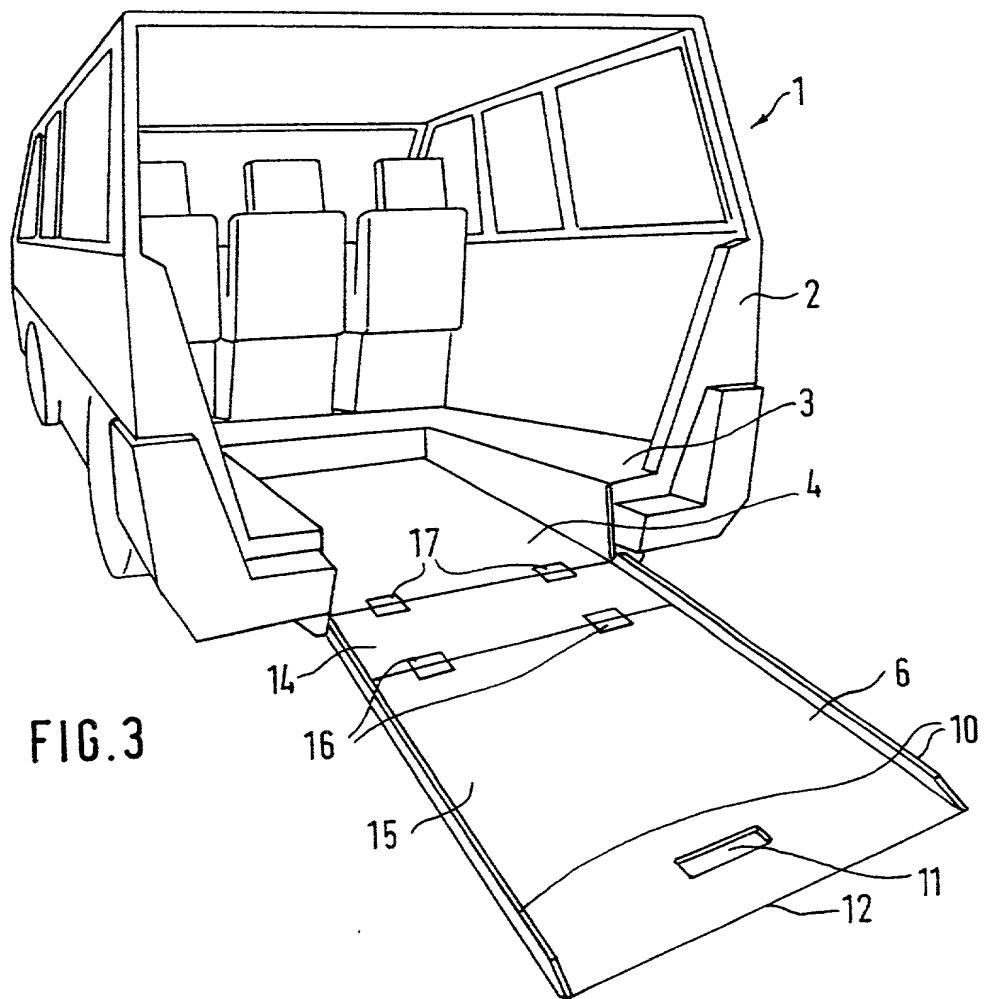


FIG.3

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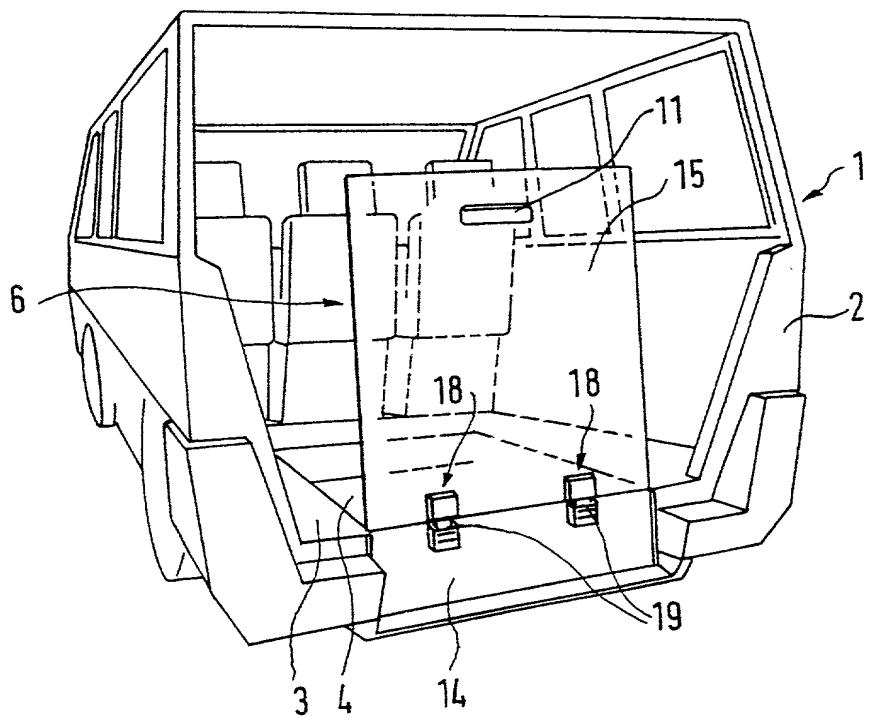


FIG.4

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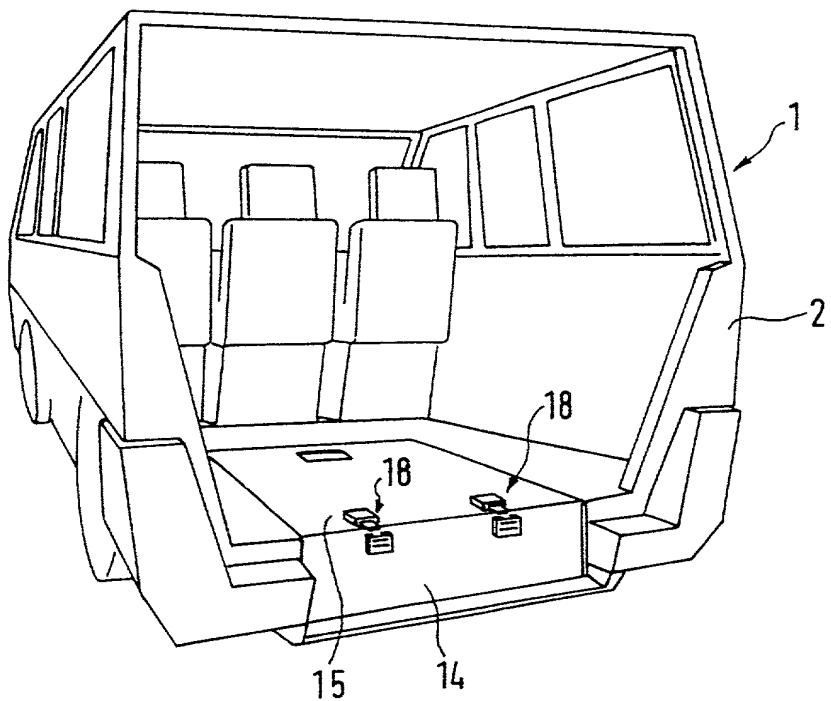


FIG. 5

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COMBINED DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
(includes Reference to PCT International Applications)

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER
225/49626

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

the specification of which (check only one item below):

is attached hereto.

was filed as United States application
Serial No. _____
on _____
and was amended
on _____ (if applicable).

was filed as PCT international application
Number PCT/EP99/05741
on 7 August 1999
and was amended under PCT Article 19
on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United State Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN/PCT APPLICATION(S) AND ANY PRIORITY CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 119:

COUNTRY (if PCT indicate PCT)	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (day, month, year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 USC 119
Germany	298 14 814.5	11 August 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Combined Declaration For Patent Application and Power of Attorney (Continued)
(includes Reference to PCT international Applications)

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER

225/49626

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) or PCT international application(s) designating the United States of America that is/are listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in that/those prior application(s) in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application(s) and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

PRIOR U.S. APPLICATIONS OR PCT INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS DESIGNATING THE U.S. FOR BENEFIT
UNDER 35 U.S.C. 120

U.S. APPLICATIONS		STATUS (Check one)		
U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER	U.S. FILING DATE	PATENTED	PENDING	ABANDONED
PCT APPLICATIONS DESIGNATING THE U.S.				
PCT APPLICATION NO	PCT FILING DATE	U.S. SERIAL NUMBERS ASSIGNED (IF ANY)		

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. (List name and registration number)

✓ Martin Fleit, Reg. No. 16,900; Herbert I. Cantor, Reg. No. 24,392; James F. McKeown, Reg. No. 25,406;
Donald D. Evenson, Reg. No. 26,160; Joseph D. Evans, Reg. No. 26,269; Gary R. Edwards, Reg. No.
31,824; Jeffrey D. Sanok, Reg. No. 32,169; and Richard R. Diefendorf, Reg. No. 32,390

Send Correspondence to: Evenson, McKeown, Edwards & Lenahan, P.L.L.C. 1200 G Street, N.W., Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20005			Direct Telephone Calls to: (name and telephone number) (202) 628-8800
201	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR MAUBACH	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME Martin
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP Berlin	POST OFFICE ADDRESS Leonhardtstrasse 18	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY Germany <i>DK</i>
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY Berlin
202	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY
203	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY
I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.			
SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 201 <i>Clark Maubach</i>	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 202	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 203	
DATE 7 May 2001	DATE	DATE	